

It does not take a scientist, Mr. Speaker, to know that funding a nuclear waste storage project which lacks a sound scientific rationale is not only wasteful, but dangerous.

I yield back the trace of all nuclear waste across this country and the green garbage it leaves behind.

DERAILING HMO REFORM

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, after years of fighting for HMO reform, we are at the doorstep of passing meaningful patient protections. But now, just before we enact the bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights, the Republican leadership is trying to derail HMO reform.

The Republican leadership has offered a plan that fails to guarantee patients the right to make medical decisions with their doctors, decisions that are free from insurance company bureaucrats. Their plan also fails to hold HMOs accountable for wrong or improper decisions, and, sadly, the only reason this plan is even being offered is to prevent meaningful HMO reform from being passed.

The bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights is a good bill. It has broad support. If we pass this bill, then all HMO patients can have the ability to choose their own doctors, guaranteed access to emergency and specialty care, the right to make health decisions with doctors only, freedom from gag rules to prevent doctors from offering care, and the ability to hold their HMOs accountable.

Let us do the right thing. We have an historic opportunity in the next couple of weeks. Let us pass the bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights.

A CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRATS

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to issue a challenge to my Democratic colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I would like for someone to explain to me whether it is your view that Republicans are extremists for wanting to limit spending and exercise fiscal responsibility or is it your view that Republicans are irresponsible for not exercising this fiscal responsibility?

Fiscally irresponsible or extreme. Which is it? I have heard both charges repeatedly in the recent weeks; and I am curious to know, for those in the party that has been dedicated to expanding government for the past 40 years to tell me what is their idea of fiscal responsibility?

I am also a bit curious to know when they think the American taxpayer should get some tax relief. After all, if one cannot make the case for tax cuts now in the face of \$3 trillion budget surpluses over the next 10 years, just what would it take to convince you that tax relief is possible?

I think it is clear that the party that wishes to limit the size of the Federal Government and the party which is careful with the taxpayers' money is the real party of fiscal responsibility. So which is it? Are Republicans extreme or fiscally responsible in our desire to limit Washington spending?

PREVENTING REAL HMO REFORM

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, once again our friends in the majority continue to ignore the will of the majority of Americans who have spoken out in support of a real Patients' Bill of Rights. Instead of heeding this call, the majority has again drafted their own cynical health care bill in a last minute attempt to prevent the people's bill, the bipartisan Norwood-Dingell bill, from passing.

The Republican health care bill unveiled yesterday is not real HMO reform, and do not believe for one second that it expands health care coverage for uninsured Americans.

The Dingell-Norwood bill, by contrast, will put doctors and their patients back in charge of health care, increase access by making sure the insured can get the medical care they need, and makes managed care plans accountable when they decide to deny care.

We must not let the opponents of the reform all our constituents asked for succeed. Support the Dingell-Norwood consensus managed care reform act.

RAIDING THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

(Mr. SCHAFFER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, the President wants to raise taxes and raid the Social Security trust fund to pay for new government spending. Do not just take my word for it, look at the facts. The Congressional Budget Office scored the President's budget as a net tax increase and House Democrats support that budget and the President wants to increase spending by billions of dollars, which the Congressional Budget Office also confirms breaks the very budget caps the President agreed to and took credit for in our budget agreement.

For the past 32 years Congress has raided the Social Security trust fund

to pay for more government. Republicans want to put an end to that. It is time for this Congress to stop playing by the rules established by liberal Democrats in the 1960's. Seniors in my district are surprised to hear that Congress has been routinely operating in this manner. They do not understand why politicians in Washington use retirement money for anything other than retirement. It just does not seem right. It is not right. We must stop the President's raid on Social Security.

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN AMERICA IS NOT GETTING PASSING GRADES

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, a new report says that 75 percent of American students cannot write a simple essay. It also says many students cannot even change a dollar bill, and many of them cannot read.

But, what is even worse, the report says these uneducated students continue to graduate. And all the experts are now looking at Congress and asking, what is Congress going to do about this?

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. This is not about Congress; this is about parents. In the old days, kids knew their ABCs before they went to school.

I yield back all the well-intended billions of taxpayer dollars that are not reaching home without the help of parents.

DEMOCRATS PUSH FOR TAX INCREASE

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, remember when? Remember when the Democrats controlled the White House and were in the majority in the House and Senate? Remember those days of spend and spend and spend? And what did they give us? The biggest tax hike in the history of our country. Why? Because they wanted to spend the money.

And remember when they were in control, how they raided the Social Security trust fund? Well, they are back at it again. Today in Congress Daily, what is on the front page? "Democrats push for a tax increase."

President Clinton's budget calls for a \$180 billion tax increase. Now House and Senate Democrats want even more in tax increases, and they also support President Clinton's budget, which calls for raiding Social Security, 40 percent of Social Security going for other programs.

Republicans say no. Let us put a stop to spending beyond our means. Let us stop the raid on Social Security. One